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A two-year research study involving six-and seven-year-old children in New Orleans and 16-and 17-year-old adolescents in Atlanta sought to provide information from the viewpoint of child psychiatry on the effects of desegregation on the lives of both white and Negro children in Southern schools.

Negro children who initiate court-ordered desegregation in the South are likely to suffer tension and pressure in a much greater degree, although not of a different kind, than other Negro children. During the school year one can observe all of the medical and psychiatric responses to fear and anxiety in these children—loss of appetite, sarcasm, insomnia, and depression. Yet the majority survive the stress and learn at an early age how to cope with their position in society and its consequences.

White children are also confronted with many stresses as they seek both to obey their parents and to follow their own natural inclinations. What the white child senses and feels in a desegregated classroom depends on the Negro child in the room; the white child himself; the way he sees the particular Negro child; and what actually happens in the room between the Negro child, his classmates, and teachers. The philosophy and desires of the teacher are important because she sets many standards and establishes the climate of the classroom.

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THE DESEGREGATION OF SOUTHERN SCHOOLS

A PSYCHIATRIC STUDY

By ROBERT COLES, M.D.

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By
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Dr. Robert Coles is a child psychiatrist who in the past two years has been engaged in the research dealt with in this pamphlet.

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Foreword

Had I not first read the manuscript before writing this Foreword, I might have said something like this:

"The Supreme Court in 1954 declared that every child had a constitutional right to racially non-segregated schooling. Because neither the southern state legislatures nor Congress acted to enforce this constitutional right, however, the burden of doing so fell upon certain Negro school children of the South. Here is a study of these children, these enforcers of the Constitution, and what it has cost them and what it has profited them in the way of happiness and intellectual growth to be the defenders of a great cause."

But having read Dr. Robert Coles's vibrant, humane report, one can't speak either so grandly or so abstractly. I can only say that here is a piece about how some children lived and learned these past two years. They are children who were in a very special situation, and they were, in a sense, servants of a cause. But I think the special merit of this report is to take our minds off the public role and the function of these children, and lead us to think about them and their individualities. Perhaps, after all, that is their true civil right.

LESLIE W. DUNBAR
Executive Director
Southern Regional Council

In the Light of History

*To catch and pin down in words — that is, to describe directly the life not only of humanity, but even of a single people.**

—LEO TOLSTOY

Since 1954 the schools of the South, their teachers and children, have lived under conflicting pressures and special conditions of uncertainty and public notice. The Supreme Court did more than simply insist upon an end to separate educational systems for white and Negro children; in effect, the schools were placed in the midst of complicated social and political issues which are far from settled and are a source of considerable controversy. Although the schools, as part of the life of the community, always must encure and reflect its troubles, perhaps never before have they been so directly involved and so directly challenged.

Customs of long duration are being assaulted by law and by direct action. Demands for desegregation of the schools and colleges are echoed in other daims upon stores, restaurants, voting booths, or parks. Each state and each city will come to terms with these issues in its own fashion, but, certainly they are issues, and certainly they seem to urge attention.

A historian recording the events of recent years would have to describe the slow but definite spread of certain changes in the way whites and Negroes get along with one another in the South. He would note among these changes the anxious and symbolic entry of small numbers of Negro children into once all white schools. He would show how this happened in town after town, and how it moved across state lines. He would tell about the different forms this desegregation of schools has taken, varying from the total and instant actions of border communities like Baltimore to the more cautious plans put into effect in Tennessee or North Carolina. He would, in some detail, concern himself with the particular plans: with how many Negro children were chosen, in what manner, and of what age and grade; with how the school officials as well as the local parents, police, papers, and politicians handled the difficult transitional problems which attach themselves to any plan, any entry.

Human affairs can be approached from many directions. Events can be listed and catalogued. Legal issues can be debated and decided. Customs can be classified. But all human affairs involve human beings, and any moment of historical importance is not only a political struggle or a social phenomenon, but a series of experiences for individual men, women, and children.

There are many and often opposing views about the Negro's role in southern life; yet, there can be little doubt that his role is changing, and one evidence for this fact is the lives of white and Negro children in many southern

* *War and Peace*, Epilogue.

schools today. Such lives deserve our attention, in the hope that if we document the feelings and ideas, the adjustments of particular persons under these stresses, we will know more about ourselves, about man's mind and emotions, and will be better able to provide for our future crises and perils. After all, there must be a time in any controversy to begin analysis and study, to take stock of what is actually happening to the participants and learn from them what may help others of us in similar circumstances.

Nature of This Study

To see and hear what is actually occurring, we have brought to bear a prolonged investigation from the point of view and training of child psychiatry in the hope that such an attempt will give us more information for reflection and future decisions. This research project has been a two-year one. It has primarily involved the cities of New Orleans and Atlanta, with children of six and seven in the former city and adolescents of 16 and 17 in the latter.

The mechanics or daily routine of the study have been as follows: the nine Negro children selected by the Atlanta Board of Education for initial desegregation in 1961 were seen three to six weeks before school opened and followed on a weekly basis in psychiatric interviews. Their feelings and experiences were noted and recorded on tape. Their parents were also seen. Interviews were conducted at the homes of the children, and during the entire school year. They were continued for a second school year, thereby affording a view in depth and prolonged duration of how colored children respond to participation in desegregation. At the same time, twelve white children in the four high schools of Atlanta chosen for desegregation have been intensively followed, with weekly interviews and separate talks with their parents. Six of these children were favorable to their new Negro classmates and six were opposed to their arrival. All were in daily classes with the Negro students. They were similarly followed a second year, giving us some idea how white children of widely different convictions on racial matters, strongly integrationist and strongly segregationist, adjust under desegregation in a deeply southern city. During these months, several school teachers and principals were seen in separate interviews and group discussions, in order to learn from those who teach under these new conditions how children get along with one another, how they study and learn, and how the teachers manage under unusual and often trying situations. In the second year of school desegregation, 40 more Negro children attended the same and six additional high schools. They were seen in groups during the year, to follow their reactions and evaluate the further progress of desegregation. Added numbers of their white classmates were also seen in groups.

For one week out of every month young children in New Orleans were visited in a pattern very much like that in Atlanta. The four Negro girls who, in 1960, were the first of their race to enter the first grades of two white schools in the city, amidst considerable unrest, have been seen in their homes, as were their parents. The seven Negro children who entered the first grade in 1961 were likewise followed, as were eight white children who were in school with these young colored children of six and seven. Some of the white parents favored and some opposed desegregation. Considerable emphasis has been placed upon drawing and painting with these children, a standard practice in child psychiatry, as well as discussion with their parents.

Finally, brief trips have been made to other cities for comparative evaluations of children and parents of both races as well as school teachers and officials. Cities visited have included Charlotte, Asheville, and Burnsville in North Carolina; Clinton and Oak Ridge in Tennessee; and Little Rock, Arkansas.

This report is, in a sense, a hybrid product. It is not intended to be a psychiatric paper,* nor is it intended to be a report which "translates" medical observations into neatly summarized layman's language. *Moreover, in the scientific spirit of observation and evaluation, it speaks of what actually happened rather than what should happen, or will in the future.* It is hoped that it will offer psychiatric and medical information, as well as discussion, to the concerned citizens of the South: teachers, school officials, people who are public spirited members of communities facing serious decisions, or going through them. Such people, in any worthwhile society, while shouldering the responsibility of both holding and transmitting what is known and valued, must be aware, all the time, that history leaves precious little untouched or unchanged. At this time in the South, and, perhaps in the North, too, the problems of desegregation warrant, for all responsible individuals, any available information or assistance.

* A full psychiatric report was made at the annual meeting of the American Psychiatric Association on May 6, 1963, in St. Louis, Missouri.

Negro Children

And indeed, in the jungle of human existence, there is no feeling of being alive without a sense of ego identity. Deprivation of identity, not frustration, leads . . . to the desperate intensity of many a symptom.

ERIK ERIKSON*

It is fairly obvious that these children are doing things which are new and not always approved. Tension and fear often surround them from the weeks before they enter school through the months of their stay. Their families are under considerable anxiety about them, and about their own lives and jobs. When they are in school they may experience rejection, isolation, or insult. They live under what physicians would consider to be highly stressful circumstances, and their adjustment to these strains is of considerable medical interest.

Those Negro children who initiate court ordered desegregation in the South are likely to be different from their peers on several accounts. Their very selection often recommends them as more intelligent or without emotional disorders which are grossly visible. While some cities allow open transfers on the basis of geographical location, many cities, particularly in the first years, consider and assign children on the basis of evaluation by tests and interviews, and thus initial selection occurs at this point. But, a closer look at these children and their families reveals that they are highly motivated, determined or willing to endure possible or probable pain for goals which are important to them. Furthermore, there are secondary gains for them as well as fears and troubles, because they may be honored and respected in their own community, and given considerable attention and support. Finally, they will often emphasize to a white person that ostracism and epithets are not new to them: they have been endured for a long time, and, therefore, can be sustained as each of them has managed, in his own way over many years, to sustain many similar situations.

It certainly is true that the pressures which these children must meet are different only in degree rather than kind, and that this makes them, on the whole, less vulnerable, in the sense that they have learned from their earliest years techniques and methods of dealing with their position in society and its consequences for them in their daily lives. For them to enter a desegregated school may be hard, but it offers them certain hopes and opportunities for work, for assertion of self, which contrast with other moments that may have seemed to them not only hard but also futile and less fulfilling.

* *In Childhood and Society*, W. W. Norton, New York, 1950. This book is an important work in psychoanalysis and child development, and has an excellent section on unconscious feelings about the Negro held by both Negroes and whites.

Each of them has his or her own life and own personality, and each of them will engage with the problems of desegregation in different ways. Doctors know that just as there are categories of diseases, there are also individual expressions and anomalies to all of them. Desegregation will vary in itself from city to city, and within any city from neighborhood to neighborhood. In the same school, each Negro child may be not only an individual, and different in that sense from others, but may elicit from white children varying reactions and responses. The irony of human existence is often revealed in striking examples, which upset all the expectations of experience and knowledge.

For instance, in Atlanta the Negro girl who was most liked by her classmates and teachers, who, of all the transfer students in Atlanta, had the highest grades, who was in the school located in the most genteel and "liberal" section of the city where acceptance of desegregation was considered most likely and its implementation least hazardous, had to return to her old Negro high school after three months. She was suffering from insomnia, depression, and cumulative fatigue; her collapse may have been precipitated by the stresses of desegregation, and slowly cleared after her departure from them, but cannot be separated from personal and family problems which simply did not allow her to remain in good mental and physical health in such a crisis. As in war, and as in disaster, a crisis will reveal hidden weaknesses as well as show unexpected strengths, and these both are often hard to predict in advance.

One child may score high in intelligence tests, may be polite and neatly dressed, but also may come from a home with many tensions below the surface, and may, under stress, respond with nervous overactivity, withdrawal from friends, or severe bodily evidence of anxiety, such as gastric disorders or migraine. Another child may be somewhat dull and of dubious sociability, but may draw in tough times upon a sense of humor or a relaxed disposition which may not be attractive or ingratiating to others, but may be quite resilient and enduring.

During a school year one can see among these children all of the medical and psychiatric responses to fear and anxiety. One child may lose his appetite, another may become sarcastic and have nightmares. Lethargy may develop, or excessive studying may mark the apprehension common to both. At the same time one sees responses of earnest and effective work, new gifts of industry and patience, and evidence of stubborn determination which surprises parents and, in retrospect, even the child. Each child's case history would describe a balance of defenses against emotional pain, and some exhaustion under it, as well as behavior which shows an attempt to challenge and surmount it.

The majority do indeed survive. Certainly in Atlanta and New Orleans only one child has really succumbed to emotional illness. These children illustrate once again the paradox of what health is. During the war it was noted in England that given a fairly stable home environment and reasonably good mental and physical health, children can sustain bombing, military disaster, and all

the trials of such times with remarkable ability.* On the other hand, every psychiatrist knows that mental illness can strike the most fortunate few who will never worry about desegregation or war. The roots of most mental illness probably lie in the early life of the child, his relationships with his parents, and his inheritance, and less likely in specific incidents in a school or playground unless these draw upon existing disorders or difficulties. Of course, sustained terror and threats can cause any mind to disintegrate, but this is not what these children in Atlanta or New Orleans have experienced.

What is important to stress here is the observation that their admission to white schools in the South and their attendance in them is stressful but not incapacitating. Their inner thoughts and feelings are of interest to social scientists, as well as to anyone concerned with how human beings get along and live with themselves and one another. But it is also important and relevant to point out that these children manifestly have been promoted and graduated, and this reveals something both of them and the nature of the stress. They draw upon reserves of home and friends and hobbies. They receive hurtful looks and words, and some of them have walked through angry crowds outside and silent reproach or noisy jeers inside. However, they also spend long hours at work in school, and they may receive friendship there, too. Indeed, so long as the school continues to function, most of their time will be spent in learning and studying.

If they are young, as in New Orleans, they will play with white children naturally and with no hindrance from them. At the height of tension in that city the few white children and the Negro children went through streets of abuse, but had no trouble with one another in the school itself. In Atlanta there may be less ease and spontaneity for these older, high school children, part from fear or hatred and part from a natural consequence of awkward, silent adolescence; but in high schools children are in class most of the time, and this restricts opportunities for embarrassment or worse. One Negro boy in Atlanta summarized the feelings of most when he said, "It was rough at times, but I learned a lot and met some nice people, and I think they got to know us a little and we got to know them, too." A little girl in New Orleans can draw similar thoughts about her own identity as a Negro, and how she plays at school with white children even though, at six, she carefully knows her color, her special problems associated with it, and her special condition of attendance in a desegregated school.

* Anna Freud's work in this regard is historic. All interested in how much children can sustain, and under what conditions they are liable to develop emotional disorders, might well read her small but deeply moving and profound *War and Children* (International University Press, New York, 1944). Of additional interest are some studies of children under the stresses of such disasters as tornadoes (in Vickburg, Miss., 1953) or floods (Rio Grande). These are available as publications of the National Academy of Sciences-National Research Council, 2101 Constitution Avenue, Washington 25, D. C., under the listing of their *Disaster Study Series.*

White Children

But these children, white and black, are not mere pawns on a chessboard, and whatever the sins or submissions of their great-grandfathers may have been, they merit consideration in their own right. In the South, this consideration steadily is being extended.

—JAMES JACKSON KILPATRICK*

When southern schools desegregate, the cameras and news reports concentrate most of their attention upon the Negro children, unless, as in New Orleans in 1960, there is a boycott attempted by whites, in which case some white families may be more harassed than the Negroes. But in every school where Negro children enter, white children are there, and they have ears and eyes, memories and ideas, beliefs and feelings. Knowledge about the adjustment of white children to this new moment in their lives and history is no less important, and, in many future situations may be decidedly helpful.

It is, again, a commonplace, but one to be remembered, that each white child will be different, coming from parents with differing backgrounds and traditions, jobs and experiences, and themselves differing in intelligence and in emotional qualities like sympathy, empathy, readiness to obey, or quickness to rebel. Whatever his personal nature and family story, he lives in a society which is changing before his very eyes, and with him as a participant. Young children of even the earliest years notice colors as they notice forms and shapes and all those things, people, and events which make up a world which they are increasingly able to comprehend. By the time a child enters school he may have many ideas about racial identity, and can begin to draw them more readily than talk about them. It is a mistake to think that young children are unaware of racial differences, or many other differences and phenomena around them. They hear, and they store memories of instructions, prohibitions, affections, and rewards. They also, in the first few grades, are at an age when they live more in the moment, more in the present of action and deeds, things to do and wishes to live out and play out. Later, as they get older, they will plan more, think more, hesitate, and control themselves in increasing nearness to and preparation for the adult world. Not that they will necessarily as adolescents accept the world of their parents, because the nature of youth is to question and disagree, sift and sort, accept and discard in the sure recognition that each generation has its own truth, its own hopes, fears, and promises. And so we see high school children naturally going through all the struggles of growing up, the doubts, silences, and outbursts which express

* *The Southern Case for School Segregation,* Crowell-Collier Press, New York, 1962. This book has a valuable bibliography. Another good source for reading is a publication of the Group for the Advancement of Psychiatry: report No. 37, *Psychiatric Aspects of Desegregation,* New York, 1957. This is a theoretical discussion of many of the problems involved in desegregation, with an excellent bibliography attached.

what it is to feel one's body stretch and, hopefully, one's mind challenged.

Thus, it is in this context of human development that we may look at what happens to white children under desegregation. We must distinguish between an attitude, or custom, and a passionate involvement. We must differentiate between an annoyance and a phobia which masks fear, with intense avoidance of things or hatred of animals or people. People like and dislike, choose and reject all the time. We get to the psychopathological when we see the consuming and possessive quality of an irrational love or hate which defies common sense or reality. Every day, doctors must separate the wide spectrum of behavior which is called "normal" from those distortions and panics of human beings which seem so strange and which signify so much unhappiness and fear.

Among the young white children in New Orleans, our remembrances about the nature of childhood and personality development will help clarify our observations. Even under the worst situations outside, the children in the schools managed well together. Those white children who remained in the desegregated Frantz school in New Orleans thoroughly enjoyed the increased attention of their teachers, the excitement around them. They often urged their more timid or justifiably frightened parents to keep them in school. In 1961 one of the white children who returned to the almost totally boycotted Frantz school told a little colored girl that she would not play with her because her mother had forbidden this, and then, a few minutes later, did just that.

One hears this over and over from children who obey *both* their parents and their own natural inclinations of age and whim, by saying words which are ideas to them, and known, and to be remembered, and yet by also doing the deeds which the moments in the playground or classroom suggest. Of course, a child of five, or 15 for that matter, may develop a true phobia about Negroes, just as he may about dogs or heights or certain foods. The child has been taught to associate extreme danger and hurt or harm with dark skin. The fear may reflect other problems in the life of the child, or may simply represent the transmission of charged and intense feelings from parent to child. In order for these parental feelings to affect the behavior of children in elementary school, however, they must derive from more than ordinary habit, or casual inclination. White parents may often be opposed to desegregation, but they consistently note that their children in the desegregated elementary schools get along easily in those schools, and the very few who don't come from homes which make such a stand a matter of virtual life and death for the child. Such children, burdened with fright, will usually avoid the Negro child rather than bother him. They are a very small minority even in a white community whose sentiments may very much be segregationist.

As the children grow and enter high schools like the four desegregated ones in Atlanta, another picture emerges. Early ideas about racial identity, carefully drawn but quickly forgotten amid play and fun, now return, with their associations and lessons, to a child who grapples with new ideas and feelings,

many of them conflicting and contradictory. Some begin to adopt their parents' ideas and some begin to reject them. As we talk with these children over the school year, we see that they fall under three large groups in their behavior and thinking about their new Negro classmates. A small number are immediately friendly and disposed to welcome them. By far the largest number are quizzical, annoyed, or would say that they don't want them or don't really care. A third group, small but articulate, are very much opposed to them and angrily willing to express their feelings in word or act which separate themselves from the quietly disapproving or careless majority.

We are struck by the continuing discrepancy between fretful dislike and passionate hatred, by the separate consequences of these two for action and thought. Annoyances shift from time to time, from object to object, but hatreds and fears stick tight and long. What happens to the white child will depend on such matters as this, on what feelings he brings to the school before the Negro child comes there about race and its meaning, and on the origin of these feelings. It is important here to emphasize again the development of their behavior and feelings as seen over a year's time with respect to the school and class situation. We know that every mind has its own style of ideas and actions and we know that skin color has a wide variety of real and symbolic meanings to people. But, how does all this affect the white child once desegregation is a reality for him? How does he come to grips with his life, his traditions, and these changes?

None of the white children seen have suffered any medical or psychiatric damage during the past year. Regardless of their views they have all continued in school and graduated or been promoted. Apart from the usual colds and an occasional laceration from football there were no medical problems; and no breakdown in ability to work and study and get along with friends and teachers could be noted. Their parents described their general physical and mental status as "normal" or "O.K." at the end of the year just as they had at the beginning of the year. The Negro children had not caused illness of body or mind observable to either themselves, their friends, their family, or a physician and psychiatrist.

Doctors have learned that even their sickest patients, some near coma or death, will notice and respond to their environment, will react to changes, visits, and messages. In psychiatry this holds, as in the rest of medicine. The most distant and disturbed or even disoriented patient will notice events around him, notice people and hear what they say, watch what they do. These people and their actions will, of course, have to sustain the filtration of a mind not well, a mind which can distort the world and cause it to splinter in prismatic fragmentation. In some way, however, in some fashion, at some level, regardless of how inaccurately and mistakenly, actions and words by people are felt and absorbed by their neighbors, by other people at hand.

What, therefore, the white child senses and feels in a desegregated classroom will depend on the Negro child in that room, the particular white child, and how he sees the particular Negro child, and, most important, what

actually happens, in the room, between the Negro child and his white classmates and teachers. What one sees after some months is the slow development of discretion and selection in the white child, the breakdown of quick and total vision and the beginning of particular vision based on daily experience. In weekly meetings one can hear even the most segregationist-minded child describe the different personalities or mannerisms of the several Negro children. One can hear them described by their faces, actions, clothes, traits. This is a kind of learning common to everyone, and represents the ability of any mind to see some of the various shapes of things and kinds of behavior around it. One can also notice after a while that none of these children, in one way or another, is insensitive to what happens at his side. If a Negro child is hurt, his white friend will be upset, his white neighbor who would vote to keep him out of the school notices, and his white enemy observes and reacts to it, too.

Illustrations abound. Tapes can be brought to life and the impact and private ripples of response to any specific event can be heard from the different children. Someone throws something at a Negro child in a class. The Negro child may laugh it off, cry about it, get angry, get a headache or stomach ache, as a consequence fight with his brother at home in delayed reaction to his inability to fight with the person in the classroom, get depressed, study intensely to make up in hard and driven work and achievement for the ignominy of the incident. A white child may see the same occurrence and sympathize with the Negro child, feel sorry for him, get angry at the person who did the deed, laugh nervously, laugh with pleasure, feel like doing the same thing, get angry at the Negro child for being in the room, say that the child deserves whatever happens because he has no right to be there, argue about the Negro child and what should be done following such events.

Over a year's time these individual responses take on the configuration of attitudes. As they congeal, they reflect changes and resistances to change, and it is often hard to predict which person will feel which way at the end of the year. A classroom is in many ways a temporary family. Children learn in it, but they also have to get along with their brothers and sisters in it, as well as their parent-teacher. When a child is isolated or feels bad, many others notice this. They notice this apart from their political or social views, and sometimes even in spite of them. For these views are abstract and often not tied to people as concrete as classmates. *How* one notices will vary. You can notice by fellowship and pity and tender identification. You can notice by guilt and anger, by wishing to get rid of the source of pain or shame or embarrassment. You can notice by hate and rage, by angry denunciation which often may reflect inner, unknown anxiety, fear, or even guilt.

White and Negro Children Together

Each generation gives new form to the aspirations that shape education in its time.

—JEROME S. BRUNNER*

There are definite patterns to the way Negro and white children get along in the schools of the South which desegregate. These will depend upon the age of the child, the nature of the school and its neighborhood, the specific climate both within the school and in the city, and, of course, the children involved. Cities differ, and districts within them also. Police may perform differently, papers vary in their messages, and community leaders are not all the same. In talking about how individual children manage we cannot ignore the world in which they live.

Together at six is not like being together at 16, regardless of all the other factors. Young children of the two races play together and work together even though they have heard many remarks at home which might discourage this. A game means more to a child than an idea at this age. When they get into junior high and high school, this will change, as, indeed, will many other kinds of behavior, apart from the racial problem; then one sees both friendliness and antagonisms expressed in the ideas and activities which characterize teenagers. One sees changes in these ideas and activities, too. You can hear old ideas of suspicion and distrust, contempt and disdain, give way to personal knowledge. This happened with two of our openly segregationist children in Atlanta, and has been reported by others to their white friends.

In the school in Atlanta where social and economic conditions were poorest, with people worried about jobs, income, security of home, and place in society, the two Negro girls went through a year of continued silence, isolation, occasional insult of word and even deed. When one of them was ready to graduate she felt that she had no friends at all, and could really talk to no one, though all year she had reported that many would talk to her furtively in cloak rooms or empty corridors. White children had, at the same time, reported her difficult times, and their own fears of talking with her, despite their impulses of sympathy, curiosity, or friendliness. Adolescents worry deeply about what others think because they are so unsure of what they themselves think, or who they are. Each fears the ostracism of the other, because each trembles at himself and with himself in those uncertain years. On the last day of school the Negro girl was approached by over 15 classmates who asked her whether they might autograph her yearbook. She was afraid, as the first child asked, because she felt that it might be a means of attack and insult rather than an expression of good will. Any Negro child has her own angers and distrust, and must come to terms with them, too.

* *The Process of Education,* Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1962.

Many cannot accept friendliness out of long years of their fate. But Martha offered her book, and some of the comments speak for themselves:

> Martha, I don't know how you've felt this year, but I'm sure there have been times of loneliness and frustration. Surely you realize that ways you have been tested at times are not personal but merely instances of a gigantic, universal, social problem. I have known you to be a quiet girl with courageous dignity. Best Wishes . . .
>
> *Another said:*
>
> Martha, I have admired your great courage in your great decision. I'm sure you've been subjected to much unpleasantness, but you've met it in a most gracious way.
>
> *Again:*
>
> Dear Martha . . . as you said in English class one day some of us can't express how we really feel toward you, but I would like to take this opportunity . . .
>
> *A girl wrote:*
>
> Dear Martha, . . . I know that since I, too, am a new senior I have had my troubles. I only hope that you will forgive those of us who have been mean and ugly . . .
>
> *A boy wrote:*
>
> Martha, I cannot tell you how much I admire your courage and determination. After you had finished that little talk in English, in my eyes you were 'nine feet tall.'
>
> *Finally:*
>
> Dear Martha . . . I'm sorry not to have been able to get to know you better, but that is just the way it turned out . . . I guess that you can understand why I haven't become better acquainted with you. But I personally think that I have missed a great opportunity.

It seems that one cannot predict until the last minute has departed how these children will get along.

There are no easy rules in human behavior, and there seems to be no easy way of evaluating the different schools and different cities. It is obvious that a city where the Negro and white communities get along well and with equality will offer the best hope for a quiet transition. The rural, Appalachian towns in North Carolina seemed to bear this out. Certainly in Burnsville the high schools showed the fullest harmony and spontaneity among the colored and white children, which the principals felt to be a reflection of communal ease in racial relations.

In Atlanta, the best situation from the point of view of both Negro and white students, that is that situation which both groups felt to be least tense and most nearly normal, prevailed in neither the two schools located in what are often called "marginal areas," changing neighborhoods racially, and of relatively low income, nor in the school belonging to the wealthy area. It occurred in a school in a middle class region which drew upon a more diverse religious and ethnic population, and which had high standards of teaching corresponding to the high ambitions of the parents for their children. In this

school real friendships developed between the two Negroes and their white classmates, and the Negroes became less guarded and cautiously aloof. It is dangerous to generalize, but there certainly can be an unnatural strain in transferring one or two very poor Negro children to a wealthy suburban school where, at first, class differences are as confusing as those of skin to both parties.

During the year Negro children get their satisfactions from simple survival, from survival with good performance, and from signs of welcome and friendship which may come their way. During the year the white child may slowly begin to recognize the Negro child and speak with him, or steadfastly avoid him. All of the white children whom we saw who favored desegregation were nevertheless inhibited in their words and deeds during the school year. They repeatedly said that they were afraid to talk with Negro children at certain times or in certain public places such as the cafeteria or crowded corridors. Such was the case particularly in the first months in all the schools, and, in two of the schools, all year. The Negro students felt that many of their classmates were sympathetic or curious about the Negroes, but afraid to reveal any relationship with them because of fear of ridicule or rejection. All attributed the sources of such potential animosity to vague elements—"a few who are noisy," or "a lot of the kids," or "enough people to make it uncomfortable." Many increasingly saw themselves victimized more by their own anxiety than by what others did or might do. At this point they usually initiated the kinds of friendly exchanges which they had denied themselves earlier out of apprehension.

Among the segregationist children several changed their minds over the year, all attributing this change to what had happened at school, to noticing and getting to know a particular Negro child, to thinking about the problem because they were part of a desegregated school, to responding to their friends and their ideas and examples and influences. These children still had considerable trouble in talking with the Negro children, even after their feelings had changed, describing themselves as being shy, feeling awkward or uneasy, or, in one case, guilty. The following excerpt from a taped interview describes very clearly what happened to one boy, a senior in one of the four schools in Atlanta. It was made in April 1962, the first year of desegregation then nearing its end.

> I've really changed a lot of my ideas. You can't help having respect for them, the way they've gone through the year so well. They're nice kids, that's what you find out after a while. They speak well, and are more intelligent than a lot of my friends. You have to understand how we've grown up. They were slaves to us, I mean even after the Civil War . . . I was taught to expect them to do anything I wanted at home . . . they belonged in the kitchen, or fixing your socks . . . that's the way you grow up and that's what most of us expect . . . and then we're told that they're supposed to go to school with us . . . my daddy nearly died . . . Mom told him he'd get a stroke if he didn't stop it . . . I sneered a few times the first few weeks, but I just couldn't keep it up, and I felt kind

> of bad and sorry for them. I used to get nervous when I'd see them eating alone. I wondered how I'd have felt if I were in their shoes . . . next thing I knew I was quiet when some of my friends were calling them all the old names . . . I felt that I never again would look at them the way I did last September and before . . . I can't really describe any time or episode . . . no, it was just a kind of gradual feeling . . . I argue with my parents . . . my mother is pretty good on the subject, she can change her mind, but my father is impossible to talk with . . .my brother and I agree that he's probably going to be in a desegregated school in a few years . . . it'll be easier for him . . . I still argue with my friends, they laugh at me, call me a damn 'nigger lover' . . . they sit and have a time planning what they'll do to make things rough for them, but never do them . . . never do much but mutter something under their breath in the corrider . . . teachers won't let them get away with anything 'wise' . . . they'll insult one of them, then call them up in the evening and joke with them about going out on a date . . . I can't figure this out.

This is a record of obvious emotional change, based on new kinds of human contact. It can and does happen. It also can fail to happen. Three children have clearly and consistently indicated their strong dislike of Negroes, of their presence in the white schools, of their presence in any situation not traditionally accepted as for them. Their attitudes were essentially the same at the end of a year of desegregation, in one case expressed even more strongly and angrily. At some other moment their stories, their feelings and fears must be told. We can only mention here the chief themes which come again and again: that Negroes will lower standards; that they are dirty and diseased; that they are like animals; that they are not like white people, inferior, less intelligent, born and made to serve. Themes of betrayal, of being cheated and hurt come to their minds and words. Two of these children experience physical revulsion when near a Negro, "like dirt being rubbed on you" one told me, and they try to avoid them with great care and obvious show. One is less afraid of them than provoked, and is more concerned with expressing his anger, showing them that he can taunt and tease them. It may be of psychiatric interest that they show a kind of sensitivity and concern for the Negro children, and some guilt and anxiety about their own behavior and thoughts, and that this can be ascertained by listening over long periods of time to them, to their words and associations, to their account of their feelings, to their dreams and stories and jokes and deeds.

Nor do some Negro children lack strong feelings about whites, feelings of hatred, feelings often remarkably similar to those encountered by them from hostile whites. A Negro boy told us: "I hate them, all of them, and when I can help it, I try to stay clear of them. They cause trouble whenever they can, and they're the ones who are dirty. . . . I'm here to claim this school, because it's as much ours as theirs . . . they're going to have to learn to live with us, and they'd better learn it, because they need us. I mean, they need our help to civilize them . . . they're like savages, that's what whites are like, savages."

Psychiatrists know that sometimes people express affection with anger, their interests or curiosity with sarcasm and distance, their shame and guilt with rage and hatred. But such knowledge must be very carefully translated into the practical problems of the school, the classroom, and the teachers. Let us turn to them now.

Teachers and Classrooms

It is obvious that the relation of teacher to pupil is an emotional one and most complex . . .

—JACQUES BARZUN*

In the South teachers will not be immune from natural curiosity and surprise when a custom of long duration changes. As human beings they will have many and different views, perhaps conflicting views and feelings. The rhyme or reason to what one sees in the several towns and cities can only be seen in just this: that what happens is highly individual, and will depend on the local situations, the local school within a school system, the particular problem at hand, the nature of the white and colored children, who they are, how they generally get along, what has happened to them in the past and, finally, upon their teachers, and principals, what they do or do not do, and their view of their role in this new situation.

In a sense, issues and developments like this put to test the very nature of education, the very profession of teaching, the very role of the school in the life of the city or town. All professions struggle with the balance, and occasional tension in that balance, between the private man with his own personality and emotions, hopes and doubts, and the more public man of the profession, or job, with all its special needs and requirements which seem to have a life of their own, apart from that of the individual. In moments like those facing the South today, there will inevitably be challenges to this balance in public officials, in lawyers and judges, and in school officials and teachers. New accommodations seem to be needed, and there will be strains as these are made. We cannot expect that an issue like that of school desegregation, so charged with meaning and symbolism to so many, could leave teachers unaffected or uninterested.

It is a fact of the past few years that schools plagued by crowds, boycotts, and even violence have, with occasional forced interruptions, continued to function. In New Orleans the two schools there persisted even though one of them had only the three Negro children in attendance, and, in effect, was more abandoned than desegregated. Teachers there were subjected to heavy pressures to boycott these schools, and their problems were often the same as those of the white parents. Many of them were opposed to desegregation, some very strongly, others with less fervor. But they were also teachers, and loyal to their job, their principal, the decisions of their school board. What happened was that the schools remained open, if under-populated, and the teachers taught.

Several of them have described the development of a kind of school spirit which emerged from a position of beleaguered isolation and experience of

* *Teacher in America*, Doubleday, New York, 1954.

attack. Songs like "Frantz School Will Survive" were sung, and a kind of small family feeling developed. "Divided loyalties" would describe much of the situation, and a kind of adherence in the end to professional responsibilities and obligations. What was described by one teacher was, "I didn't like it, but I also couldn't walk out on my job. That would be unthinkable." This view has been described by many teachers in several cities. In Atlanta one could feel the teachers themselves coming to terms with the problem as citizens, some favorable, some opposed, many in doubt, conflict and ambivalence. But one could also sense in them a deep sense of professional integrity, of identity as teachers which transcended their private feelings about race. The children felt this, too. We heard few criticisms from white or Negro children about their teachers, few complaints of hurtful action or expression. This was one of the subjects which seemed to unite all the children, black and white, integrationist and segregationist. (In some cases, teachers not emotionally able to cope with a desegregated classroom have been permitted to take other assignments.)

Those who have taught under these new conditions describe interesting things about themselves and their classes. They will talk about their own nervousness, their own early uncertainties and fears, and their own curiosity about these Negro children, and how they will get along. Many of them went through, during the year, the kinds of re-evaluations and re-assessments which can come only from actual human contact and experience. For many it is as much a year of finding out and observing as of teaching. Like the white children, they are meeting Negroes in a new context, and many new perceptions may come to them, and must be assimilated in their minds. Teachers will describe their own estimates of the Negro children, their own likes and dislikes of them as individuals and as a group distinct from white people. They will describe the early silence and tension, the developing patterns of behavior, the onset of problems and dilemmas, the ways that the year ended, and their estimates of how the year's experience went for them as well as the children.

Needless to say, reports like these will vary from teacher to teacher, from situation to situation, as will their classroom behavior and their feelings and beliefs. Many teachers have been very sympathetic and kindly to the Negro children, and have attempted to convey this to them, and to white children also in some hope that they will be influenced. Others have felt more distant, and unwilling or unable to do more than teach in fine impartiality or neutrality. A few have had to deal with serious disciplinary problems, when teenagers in Atlanta have thrown objects or marked school property with unfriendly words of chalk and pencil. Then there develop questions of school clubs and activities, athletics and newspapers, all the various groupings and actions which revolve around the school, even if not part of formal teaching and studying. A high school in America is much more than a place where children learn. Even an elementary school is more than that. In New Orleans there were problems about whether the Negro mothers would come to the

parent-teacher meetings, the school parties at Easter or Christmas, or help, as parents do, in school plays or celebrations. In Atlanta similar problems about the Negro parents had to be faced, and, also, the more complex ones about whether a Negro boy or girl could belong to a school club, or go to a game, could work on the paper, or go to a dance.

By the time one is in the second year of close scrutiny of these matters, and has traveled from city to city for comparative purposes, one begins to see how many of the solutions to these problems come about. Like the very nature of our American school system, they are not decided uniformly or by wide ranging administrative fiats.

Indeed, all the paradoxes of man's nature can be seen in the landscape of these southern schools. So much seems to come from whim, fancy, sudden impulse, as well as from careful planning and calculation. Hard times in New Orleans streets stood side by side with easy times in the school (the crowds outside the school were largely *not* the mothers of the school children, anyway). In Atlanta no Negro parents appeared at a parent-teacher meeting which expected them, while in another district they attended with no trouble. Their own initiative decided the issue. In the two schools where the Negro children had the easier time, they avoided dances, advised in this course by principals aware of possible difficulties. Yet, in another school, where there had been much less friendliness among the children, the Negroes, perhaps propelled by their own dissatisfactions and loneliness, decided to go to a dance. Their principal allowed this to happen, and the event turned out quite well. One city, where there has been no trouble, hesitates about club membership, while another, more harassed, simply assumed that certain extracurricular activities go with attendance itself, even in the midst of desegregation. The patterns are almost as numerous as the numbers of schools.

The philosophy and desires of the teacher cannot be under-estimated. It is fairly obvious that a teacher can set many standards and establish many kinds of climates. Some teachers have felt that their work should be pursued with no concern for what happens to the children emotionally, with little active involvement in the way the children of both races get along. "They're in the school, I'll teach them . . . if there's disorder in the class, I'll stop that . . . but that's as far as I'll go." Other teachers are very much concerned with how their students get along with one another, and are aware of how much they can facilitate this with a word here, a deed there. The references made by Martha's white classmates to the English class, as quoted earlier, illustrate very graphically what one teacher did, and how much this affected so many children.

There had been much silence, and a few were heckling her while the majority sat by nervously and anxiously. The teacher, sensing this, simply asked Martha, suddenly, and with no advance notice, to tell the class how she felt about her several months' "stay" at the school. Martha did, in her quiet, plain and simple manner, and she was heard. What we had been hearing from some of the white children during some of the episodes of teasing, of throwing paper and pennies, was their own anxiety and disapproval of this and their sense of helplessness in the face of what they felt to be intimidation. Two events helped change this. One was the teacher's action in allowing Martha to talk, which helped Martha, and helped mobilize the sentiments of these white children. The other was when Martha and her friend Rosalyn, the other Negro girl, reached the point where they started resisting by reporting incidents, and, also, speaking out their determination to defend themselves from attack if necessary. Many white children had reached the point of intervening themselves, so upset were they. They were relieved by this firmness on the part of the Negro children, and the combination of resistance by the Negroes, rather than quiet and daily passive acceptance of insults, with action from the teachers and principal, stopped the grosser episodes of molesting behavior.

There can be no doubt that teachers can allow things to go on, and often prevent them from occurring. Teachers recognize that their continuing task is to encourage those parts of the person which want to learn, study, cooperate in class, contribute to the school community; and to discourage those inevitable parts of any person which tend to discourage education, cooperative effort, and individual acquisition of information and skills. The noisy, uncooperative child, the emotionally disturbed child, the defiant child, the extremely shy child who cannot communicate or will not share, the arrogant genius, and the shy retarded child, all these are but variations in the school population, daily variations, daily challenges, requiring daily decisions affecting the welfare of both these special cases and the rest of their mates. The entire school's children will be influenced by the way these particular children behave, and by the way they are handled by their teachers, and allowed to be treated by others.

It would seem that once the Negro child enters the schools, he would also require the kinds of thought and preparation which traditionally are accorded such unusual or special cases. A desegregated classroom in many southern cities in this period is a specially challenging one to the educational profession. The level of educational achievement may well vary with the skills of the teachers in handling some of the problems of human encounter before them.

Desegregation and Human Development

*Without quite acknowledging it, many Southerners during these years had been waging a kind of war with themselves. Increasingly their ideal of a stable social order came into conflict with the social and political realities with which they were confronted.**

WILLIAM R. TAYLOR

Lives are unique. Given this, however, can we come to useful or meaningful *conclusions* or *generalizations* about human beings involved in social changes? I should think so.

When schools have been desegregated in southern cities, uncertainty, with its sequelae of anxiety and fear, is evident. School officials cannot control all the variables which insure the quiet and orderly entry of Negro students into formerly all white schools; and they will, as professionals, require help from many quarters. Yet, a city's educational leaders have certain opportunities of their very own in a crisis like this: a chance to act wisely and carefully, in the best interests of the school children and the continuing effective function of the schools. An entire city, of course, prospers when its schools manage such a hurdle successfully. The following discussion, drawing upon what is now the medically studied past, would hope to help in any future situations as well as serve as a reminder or record of what has been.

One problem always facing a city's school officials is to select the age group of Negro students first to be introduced into the formerly all white schools. Most educators and doctors would agree that from the viewpoint of teaching alone, it is obviously better to start with the first grades. Our research emphasizes what we already know about human development, that at five children are governed by needs of the moment: to play, to sing, or shout. They most certainly understand many of the meanings of skin color, because they hear the words and commands of their parents; but, except in rare cases, tensions and ideologies of the adult world will not undo what is, after all, their "childhood." In the first grades children are influenced by constant surges of energy, prompting action, curiosity, exploration of mind and body alike. Ideologies are foreign to them. Seeds of later attitudes are in them, make no mistake about that. But they will not flower until later, when the child thinks and hesitates more, is more responsive to the laws of society than the young child.

In the earlier grades, moreover, there are less fixed disparities of educational achievement than in higher grades, even though capacities will vary from the first moment of the first grade of school. We have yet to know exactly what "intelligence" is. Factors of environment, not simply social and economic, but subtle familial ones, are doubtlessly significant. Paradoxes flaunt themselves before us as we try to grasp answers. Poor, dull parents produce a singularly bright child, or wealthy, cultured ones a dullard or delinquent. There are, however, certain broad generalizations which indicate that *performances in our schools* can be grossly correlated with certain forces at work in the child's home life. The more efforts are made to deal with the negative kinds of such influences, for instance, disheartened or illiterate parents, unconvinced or skeptical of the value of learning for their children, the better the chance that the child will stay in school and learn. By high school children have learned not only new facts of reading and writing, but hope or despair, effort or sloth.

Whites and Negroes of the South, perhaps all over America, can agree that Negro schools are generally inferior, even where bright new buildings belie the assertion. Schools are more than bricks and mortar, and no child or school system can ignore the history of Negro education in America, a reflection, of course, of the Negro's experience in America. Still, against the troubled imprint of our past history, we always have the renewed chance which each fresh generation offers. If we have no conclusive answer to the problem of inheritance and "basic intelligence," if we would be fools to deny the importance in a child's life of his genes, we can at least acknowledge the known medical facts that the early years exert powerful persuasion upon human development and education alike. By 14 so very *much* has happened, and in those last few years of school there is little time or inclination, given the nature of adolescence, for easy reversals of long standing and accruing assets and liabilities.

Teen-aged youth acquire a host of challenges as their bodies stir and minds begin to leave home and prepare for a place in the world. Though we are often impressed by their capacity for sudden, careless, rebellious behavior, those who work with adolescents—teachers, athletic instructors, ministers, and doctors—know that the flamboyant protest often masks the quiet, but more significant truth: of anxious, insecure young men and women, no longer so freely impulsive and playful, struggling now with thoughts and feelings, with questions of rank and role, with decisions of the moment which will affect a life-time. No longer is a game merely a game, a lesson just a way of pleasing a teacher. A high school classroom is a microcosm of the outside world, on whose threshold the child now stands; and all the struggles "out there" are quite nearby, as well they must be with young men and women so near full citizenship.

What, then, of such matters of age and behavior as they relate to desegregation? If young children, white and Negro, will get along more easily and have less of the wear of years of differential education to complicate matters, why any question of when to start desegregation? Perhaps a student of child development can offer a reply here, too. For, after all, a five year old child is much more a part of his parents' world, much more dependent upon them, their body, soul, and mind, just as they are more surely and constantly at-

* *Cavalier and Yankee*, The Old South and American National Character, Braziller, New York, 1961.

tached to him. The older child—a very definition of his aging—begins to depart, seeking in friends, in older people other than his parents, new relationships and supports. When there is desegregation in a tense town, the high school may stand more removed from fearful mothers, seized with transient panic, apt to keep their children home or succumb to aroused mobs. Furthermore, those in the community prone to agitation may be more stimulated by the sight of young children, of both races, friendly in spite of admonitions, than by the naturally aloof and hesitant behavior of most high school students.

These conjectures are threatened only by the logic of events. Whites and Negroes, many teachers, too, agree that the mobs in New Orleans comprised people predominantly having no children in the temporarily and partially boycotted schools. Further, given decisive police support, there were no mobs the next year, even with widespread extension of desegregation to other elementary schools. Memphis, Asheville, Knoxville, Dallas have started with the first grades with little or no outside interference. Finally, mobs have formed with college desegregation, given ripe conditions: Memphis and Oxford, Miss., a scant 50 miles apart, will confirm this.

It would seem, therefore, that school officials might best proceed in desegregation according to their own professional dictates, insisting that other office holders such as the police do likewise. Evidence here indicates, ironically, that even with external stress such as in New Orleans, young children of both races seem able to learn without any physical or emotional injury or collapse, given reasonable, initial good health and a functioning school system.

Another question about desegregation asked by many is the academic one of how successfully Negro children learn and whether white children continue to learn. The answer in both cases would seem to be yes. Even the strongly segregationist children we have followed for two years have continued their studies without impairment. They report the same for their friends. In no case has any of them complained of any feeling of lowered standards in their classes. One white girl remarked to me: "They never stopped me from learning. I wouldn't give them the satisfaction." Another white student with several Negroes in his class, was determined to better his grades: "I couldn't let them beat us out." (They didn't; he was a bright boy whom no one could easily "beat out.")

Distractions caused by desegregation, such as the obviously awkward first moments, are more temporary, if quite noticeable, than enduring or paralytic to the performance of children in the classroom. One teacher, a veteran of Little Rock's stormy first years of desegregation, talking of how the white students functioned, said: "Despite it all, even with the troops to keep everyone diverted, I feel our children continued to learn, and that's what we all held to as teachers, that the children were getting an *education* through it all." If the school remains open, its momentum of teaching will reach its students.

Negro children may or may not have academic troubles. Some do, some don't. By and large, if the younger ones manage well, the older ones sometimes have the burden of their former years: "We just don't work as hard in

our schools as the whites do. . . . Maybe we don't believe it pays off. . . . Isn't it tough to get a job even if you do have the best degrees and you're Negro?" Yet, even where high school students initiate desegregation, even with all the emotional strains of the first years, Negro children in southern cities have done surprisingly well. Atlanta's first group, nine boys and girls, were carefully selected with a view to their academic success, which quite generally they achieved. For the second year the city largely ignored prospective success at studies and emphasized geographical factors. A higher incidence of learning difficulties resulted, but very few which were insurmountable; this, even with 15- and 16-year-old children, from schools often far from comparable to the white ones. Finally, we have yet to hear a southern teacher complain of any drop in intellectual or moral climate in a desegregated room or school.

Do changes occur among the attitudes of the white and Negro children as they go to school together? We have indicated so, but time renders any judgment dangerous indeed, for we are dealing with problems of perception, of symbolic thinking. (Think for a minute of the complex imagery of "black and white" in our literary and linguistic traditions. "Black" describes a Negro, but long before slavery it was associated in European minds with the "devil," or mourning, or a host of other negative connotations. This is a subject for study in and of itself; we may just note here that no mind is entirely free of its unconscious associations). We are also faced with problems of customs and habits, acquired as we grow, which are able to shape our sights in later years, able to influence what we hear and what we ignore. If what Henry James so often called our "sensibilities" (a capacity to respond sensitively to life and its dilemmas) are thus conditioned, they also have their own force and moment. The important distinctions in psychiatry are between those who have a conscience and those who don't, between those who are mainly rational and those who are commonly impulsive. Most humanity suffers, becomes enraged upon occasion, is joyous or is sad; but, whatever the mood, sees and listens under the protection of both conscience and what we in medicine call a "sense of reality." These two aspects of our emotional development are critically important in our lives, lest we be irresponsible or incoherent: our sense of right and wrong and our ability to separate in our minds the real from the imaginary (no matter how attractive the imaginary may be).

Consequently, we see changes in both Negro and white children as days become weeks and months. A firmly segregationist boy cannot but notice the difference between two Negro classmates, their separate manner, minds, attire. A Negro girl no longer sees, as she put it, "just white," but many separate individuals. It takes a high order of mental disability for such basic observations to be prevented.

Teachers will meet many new situations, not only the obvious and immediate ones described here, but those requiring careful thought and not a little introspection. Problems of the "crisis" of desegregation will yield to those of attitude, or fairness in discipline and teaching—not that these matters do

not concern conscientious teachers all their professional lives. The usual pitfalls in teaching will be just a shade more noticeable in any specially tense situation: nervous rigidity which stifles easing of barriers, or a leniency which allows fast increasing disorder. In desegregated schools teachers will be dealing with not only the problems of their children, but those of their own lives, their habits, and expectations. These teachers should not spare themselves careful self-examination.

"How can I be fair to them all, the Negroes and whites both?" We have heard teacher after teacher in the South ask this question. Glib answers are fast spoken, but useless. There are no rules except those already known: that classrooms are for learning; that each child is an individual, but, at school, is mainly a pupil (or, hopefully, a student); and that what is important is that this role, this opportunity, be guarded in order to flourish. Here is a brief moment in Atlanta: "I think I bend over backwards to be fair with the nigra students, and sometimes I think they're getting away with too much." We told this sensitive, earnest lady that what Negro students wanted and deserved was a fair chance, not a new form of protected separation. She realized that perhaps she felt guilty about their past, or may even still feel anxious to keep them "separate" in her mind and behavior. A year later she remarked: "When I forgot about skin, or mostly did, and treated them as children who either knew their grammar or didn't it became better. I remember the first time I raised my voice at the nigra girl . . . I knew then that I'd solved a lot of my problems in teaching with nigras in my class." Ironies, complexities of emotions and behavior, will touch all of us, the best intentioned perhaps most of all.

Those children and teachers whose feelings are exceptionally strong about desegregation are, really, a special, and rather small group. We know in watching children grow, and we know from our work in clinics and hospitals, that even the most rigid ideas do not exist in isolation, that sentiments conflict with one another as well as support one another. Our studies show that many people oppose desegregation, but also oppose the closing of the schools, mob behavior, or insulting or assaulting a fellow student, regardless of skin color. Comments quoted earlier in this report suggest that the particularly enraged person, be he teacher or student, is relatively rare among millions of Southerners. Too long have those who are committed to many customs and traditions besides racial ones allowed this one problem to dominate all others.

Finally, we should like to emphasize a little of what we in medicine and psychiatry know, and also don't know, about people, and especially children. Psychiatrists are beginners. We know so little about *whether* people *will* do certain things, though, once done, we are better at figuring out why. The mysteries of the physiology of the brain, our 'bio-electric circuits" of thinking, still elude us, though we daily press closer upon them. Nor have we yet determined how much of our behavior and intelligence is controlled by genetic factors and how much by social or cultural ones.

Yet, we have spent decades studying and treating people, and are continually struck by how far any man can move with a given inheritance, a given endowment at birth. To deny mankind, and particularly its children, a large measure of supple potentiality would contradict observations which go back to the dawn of history itself. As I write these words I have before me books and reports which, in their sum, are eloquent testimony to our stubborn ability as humans to survive nature's accidents and disasters as well as the folly of man's making. War, concentration camps, pestilence—and still life gathers itself together, often makes needed changes and goes on. Any observer of child behavior knows how flexible children can be, how much they can grow and learn, given even far from optimal conditions. If we in America, in the South, deny our own plasticity and sensitivity, our own responsive capacities, we remove ourselves from our very nature as human beings. This, in truth, is a form of segregation. It is not merely undesirable, but, in a country such as ours, deadly.

We would recommend, therefore, the closest study of the desegregated school by all of those interested in the welfare of American children. This is a national problem, and there are no easy and, perhaps, few general answers. The more specific the information we accumulate about specific situations and conditions, the better informed we will be, and the better prepared to apply this knowledge to new and often unique as well as similar crises or events. It would seem wise for all Americans to look carefully at the actualities amidst us. It can be very dangerous to shun them.